



Ashley Conroy
Las Vegas: 702.862.5411
FAX: 702.862.5496
Cell: 702.374.8287
E-Mail: ashley.conroy@dri.edu
755 East Flamingo Road
Las Vegas, NV 89119
<http://www.dri.edu>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

NSF-EPSCoR announces major funding to Nevada and the Desert Research Institute
Grant will support the state in related research for the next five years

LAS VEGAS/RENO – The Desert Research Institute is proud to be a part of the Solar Energy-Water-Environment Nexus in Nevada thanks to a five-year, \$20 million grant from the National Science Foundation to examine and improve the effectiveness of solar installations in arid desert lands.

“The NSF-EPSCoR “NEXUS” project aims to position Nevada at the forefront of research on solar energy and its relation to water and the environment. DRI’s experts in water, earth, ecosystem and atmospheric sciences will play a critical role in making the “NEXUS” a success,” said Dr. Stephen Wells, President of the Desert Research Institute. “DRI is honored to be a part of this and a leader in environmental research in Nevada.”

The grant will be supported through the state’s Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) office and is distributing funds to Nevada’s three major institutions of higher education: the Desert Research Institute, the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and the University of Nevada Reno. Each institution will work in a team environment to optimize environmental science, workforce development, and external engagement. Out of nine states that applied for this grant, Nevada is one of four to be awarded the funds.

Harry Reid, U.S. Senator for Nevada made the official announcement on Monday, May 13, 2013. He says the time is now for the state to continue its track as a leader in clean energy development.

“Nevada has come a long way in developing our nation’s clean energy best practices. By bringing together the greatest minds in Nevada, we can overcome obstacles that hamper clean energy development in Nevada and elsewhere. I am confident that their findings will allow our state and others like Nevada, to harness our vast clean energy potential.”

DRI specifically will be leading the environmental research portion of the NSF-EPSCoR grant. Dr. Markus Berli, DRI’s Environmental Soil Physicist and one of the NEXUS Principle Investigators, says it’s critical the impact of solar energy production on arid environments can be studied in a collective setting.

“The Solar Energy-Water-Environment Nexus in Nevada presents an exciting opportunity for collaborative research on solar energy production and its connection to water in an arid environment,” said Dr. Berli.

Statewide, the grant money will also help with various educational outreach components through Science-Technology-Engineering and Math (STEM).

“This project will importantly promote education in solar energy, water and environment with programs aimed at pre-college and undergraduate students with a focus to attract underrepresented minority groups, K-12 teachers, and the general public,” said Dr. Gayle Dana, Nevada NSF EPSCoR Project Director.

Note to Media: contact Ashley Conroy to reach Dr. Markus Berli for comment.

About Desert Research Institute: *DRI, the nonprofit research campus of the Nevada System of Higher Education, strives to be the world leader in environmental sciences through the application of knowledge and technologies to improve people’s lives throughout Nevada and the world. All DRI news releases are available at: <http://news.dri.edu/>.*

About the Nevada Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR): *The goal of Nevada EPSCoR is to support collaborative research partnerships between higher education institutions and private industries to create long-term improvements in scientific research and infrastructures, strengthening our research and development capacity in Nevada and at a national level. Nevada EPSCoR programs enhance graduate education, stimulate undergraduate student research, and promote the involvement of women and underrepresented groups in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines. For more information on Nevada EPSCoR please visit: <http://www.nevada.edu/epscor/>*

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